HIS NAME

BY WILL SEAT.

RUFFLES is surely missing," and Selsa Buford tilted her pink flounce to step over the threshold of the henhouse and peer into all the corners. "Ruffles is gone! Haley! Do you hear?"

"I've told you that this is no good place for a henhouse," returned the unconsoling Haley as she shoveled potato and bran mush onto the ground for the flock of greedy chickens.

"Who is to know it if every blamed bird was taken off its legs and landed in a pie, while we be snoring peaceful in our beds! It's small comfort, I take it, livin' with your front door on a grand avenue and your back yard falling off like a giraffe's neck for a half a mile until the next thing you know you be livin' in the slums."

Haley gave a contemptuous motion with her spoon toward the despised population below the hill. "Just step down and ask some of them if they be after havin' chicken for dinner."

"Stop, Haley!" Selsa gave a little shriek of dismay as she sank into a convenient wheelbarrow. "The thought of Ruffles in a pie makes me quite faint."

"But where is Ruffles if she ain't in a pie?" persisted the cruel Haley. "She ain't eatin' mush."

"I don't have to answer, Haley, but because I can't answer it doesn't prove that she is in a pie. She may be under some of those bushes, farther down the hill; she may have slipped through the fence; she may be hidden somewhere, sick——"

"And she may be dead and cooked, too," interrupted the presistent Haley.

"We must find her," said Selsa, jumping up with sudden energy and leaving Haley in triumphant possession of the last word and an empty pan.

"I'll run down the hill and search among the bushes, but don't tell grandmother until we are sure she is lost. Grandmother was unusually busy this morning. She had as many as a bushel of checks to sign."

Haley knew that this meant that grandmother Buford was in one of her unapproachable moods, when it was not favorable for the bearer of the subscription blank, and it might be an act of charity to prevent the entrance of any such individual and thus save friction all around.

Haley turned toward the house, still discoursing on the futility of hunting for a "hen in a rascal's stomach," while Selsa opened the gate and started down the hill in quest of Ruffles.

She flew from one covert to another, calling in an enticing voice: "Here! Ruffy, Ruffy, Ruffy—here! Ruff—" but she was frightened out of the last syllable, for pushing back a clump of elder bushes she came face to face with a man—a young man.

He held Ruffles, apparently unharmed, her head tightly wedged under his arm so that she could not protest.

"O! she isn't cooked then—is she?" asked Selsa joyfully. "I am so glad I caught you in time. Come with me and we'll give Ruffles her dinner and then I'll ring up the police. We have a 'phone right here in the carriage house. But the mush is gone—those greedy creatures ate it all and Haley was so sure you had cooked Ruffles that she never saved a bit. But we can take some corn out of Paducah's box—she is my riding horse—corn will do, don't you think?"

They were walking up the hill, and her companion ventured only a nod.

"Will you open the gate—Mr.—what shall I call you?"

"Call me anything you like. I'm not particular. I was out looking for a name when I found this beast squeezing between the pickets at the back of the lot."

"Now don't add fibbing to your other sin. Your best chance for safety lies in telling the truth and throwing yourself on the mercy of the court. Here's Paducah's box. Put down Ruffles and shell some—it hurts my fingers to shell corn," and Selsa perched upon the stairs to the hay loft while her companion tossed the kernels to the truant bird.

"She's pretty, don't you think so? She took a blue ribbon at the poultry show."

"She's a peach. Peaches seem to grow on the hills." He said it with a twinkle in his eye.

"These aren't peach trees," answered Selsa. "Can't you tell pear trees? But probably people in the slums don't know different kinds of trees—or anything good, for that matter. Grandmother says it's elevating to study nature. That's the reason she wants the poor to have gardens and raise things. Did you ever raise things?"

"I guess I raised something when I caught this chicken. I've shelled enough corn. Why don't you telephone?"

"Because," returned Selsa quietly, "you seem to be too nice to put in jail. I mean to give you one more chance to confess, and maybe the court will declare a light sentence if you do what is right."

"Do you want me to tell a lie to free myself?"

"No, indeed; just the plain unvarnished truth."

"Well! Here it is—I intended to steal into the domain of Mme. Buford by means of the back fence like the nameless person that I am, and interview that lady upon a matter of business. When I neared the fence I came upon this winner squeezing through the pickets in an endeavor to escape, and very foolishly I tried to do a good thing and catch her and return her to her owner, but I find that he only succeeds who serves himself. I am caught as well as the bird, branded as a criminal, brought to a speedy trial and here I am, with no defense except my poor word, awaiting the verdict of an unjust judge."

"You talk pretty well for a slummer. Maybe you've been to night school. Night schools are a grand thing for the laboring classes. What did you want to see grandmother about? I can tell you she is in no good mood this morning—this is the morning she has to sign checks. I told Haley there must be a bushel."

"That's what I wanted to see your grandmother about—to ask to sign her checks for her."

Selsa looked disturbed again. "Please don't say those things. You remember judgment isn't yet passed and the nature of it will depend a good deal upon how truthfully you talk."

"It's plain that I can't talk at all, for when I speak the truth you won't believe me and I don't want to tell lies."

"I'll give you one more chance. What do you want to see grandmother about? Who knows but you mean to sandbag her?"

"That's a matter which is impossible for me to state except to the lady herself. I bear upon my person, not a sandbag, but a letter of introduction," and he extracted an envelope from the pocket of his shabby, but picturesque corduroy norfolk jacket.

Selsa glanced at the signature. "Judge Hopkins—that's where I am going for a week-end house party tomorrow—of course Judge Hopkins wouldn't give you a letter if you are a real bandit, would he? Does he know what you want to see grandmother about?"

"Judge Hopkins doesn't but his son knows and he asked his father to write this letter. His son is interested in me and wants to help me to—to get on my feet, you know."

"I should think Judge Hopkins' son would know grandmother well enough to understand that she isn't looking around for a chance to put people on their feet—she is a philanthropist and has loads of money and intends to serve posterity."

"So I have heard."

"Well! The 'unjust judge' is ready to pass sentence," and Selsa stood up in mock solemnity. "I find the prisoner to be a man quite beyond my power to understand, but if he has the courage to go and ask grandmother Buford to 'put him on his feet'—he is entitled to the mercy of the court and I declare him to be a free man."

The young man bowed low, one hand upon his breast and the other holding a ragged cap. "May I prove myself worthy of your generosity?"

Selsa watched his retreating figure. "He has the handsomest eyes I ever saw—that's the reason I couldn't ring up. I adore fine eyes," and Selsa slipped up on the other side to the kitchen door.

"Haley!" she called stealthily. "Haley! I've caught the man with the chicken and he has gone in to see grandmother. Make an errand into the dining room so you can hear what is going on in the office and come and tell me at once. Grandmother may need help," she added apologetically.

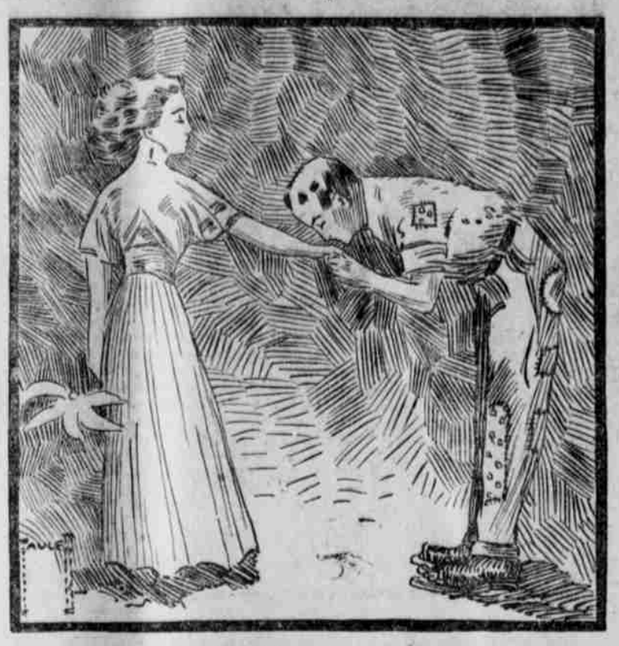
"What did he want, Haley? Is grandmother alive? I don't believe he is a chicken thief—he seemed more like a home missionary."

"He's a lunatic," announced Haley solemnly. "He wanted Mme. Buford to adopt him."

"Adopt him!" cried Selsa. "What do you mean? You must be crazy yourself!"

"Sure, ma'am—it's small pay I get for my pains—playing spy." The obdurate Haley turned to her cooking.

Selsa lost some time placating her before she could be induced to resume her narrative.



"GOODBY," HE SAID REGRETFULLY. "I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT WE SHALL MEET AGAIN."

Haley was on the floor searching under the cupboard for the top of the pepper box. "Do you think I'm wantin' more work? I've fished here in this awkward position for ten minutes now."

"Haley! Do you hear?" Selsa began to tug at the opulent figure in a vain endeavor to induce Haley to arise. "The chicken thief is in there talking to grandmother! I'll find the cover. Get on your feet and listen!"

Haley laboriously rose to a standing posture and Selsa hurried her into the dining room.

It was several minutes before she returned, during which time Selsa had not only found the peper box, but had sampled several tasty dishes which Haley had been preparing.

"What did he say? He said he was a poor orphan and had lost his parents and was searchin' a home—not a home where he would have to work—but a fine gentle home in accord with his tastes and talents. Now, if he ain't crazy to talk like that to Mme. Buford, what is he? Tim Shin, who broke in and is servin' time for it now had more sense than he. He's crazy and a crazy fool at that."

"I think you're too bad to talk like that about a nice young man who brought Ruffles back," returned Selsa.

"Bought her back, did he?"

Selsa did not reply. She, too, began to feel some misgivings herself in regard to the candor of the young man, but she chose not to continue the discussion.

"And what did grandmother say?"

Haley shugged her shoulders. "She looked a minute, then she reached for the broom and called out 'Scat!' I finished my work about that time."

"Poor fellow," said Selsa. "Did grandmother have her glasses on?"

"Sure and I don't know."

"Because if she did and looked at his eyes, she couldn't have treated him so cruelly."

Selsa hurried out of the back door in time to see the retreating figure of the young man, walking despondently down the hill. She hurried after him and reached his side just as they were back of the summer house.

"I didn't thank you for bringing Ruffles back. Was grandmother very cross?"

"I don't think you could say 'cross.' That doesn't exactly express it. She treated me as you might a spider—just brushed me aside and went on——"

"Signing checks?—yes, I know. It's her day. I knew how it would be. If you had taken me into your confidence I could have advised you, but you wouldn't, and of course you had to take the consequences."

"Can't you appreciate my condition? Can you wonder that a man doesn't like to confess to a woman that he is down and out? Isn't it manlike to keep up the brave pretence of prosperity as long as possible? I could not ask you for a loan, and it would have amounted to that."

"I wish I could help you," said Selsa impulsively. "Sit down in this summer house. I don't like to ask you how you came to this, for I am afraid it will tempt you to prevaricate again. But I've an idea," and Selsa emphasized the statement with an emphatic nod. "Could you use clothes?"

He looked deprecatingly at his costume. "Could I use clothes? I suppose you mean evening clothes. I have a business suit, you see."

Selsa laughed. "I mean women's clothes. I don't mean wear them. I mean sell them. I have just loads of clothes, and I wouldn't mind the least bit in the world clearing out my closet. And I've no end of shoes and slippers of all sorts. Grandmother wouldn't know. I often give them to the maids. Would you take them?"

"I never have been forced to accept charity, and it would be a step down."

"But it wouldn't be charity," Selsa warmed to her subject. "It would be merely a return for Ruffles, and Ruffles is worth a great deal of money. You see I really owe you a debt, but I can't pay money, for grandmother would know. She signs all the checks——"

"Yes, I know. Anyway, I couldn't bring my mind to accept money."

"But clothes would b different."

"Yes clothes would be different."

"And the money they would bring would be only what you had rightfully earned, catching Ruffles."

"I see. This view of the matter ministers materially to my self-respect."

"Wait here until I return," commanded Selsa authoritatively.

She hurried back with a covered basket. "These are the shoes. I couldn't bring the other things, because one of the maids might report to grandmother—of course the maids wouldn't want me to give things away. I could bring these because they were in a covered basket. Sit down."

Selsa removed the cover and poured the contents on the seat. "What do you think of them?"

"I think they are great."

"I knew you would. Here's every conceivable kind of color—some I've never worn but once. I'm awfully cranky about shoes."

"So I should judge."

"Of course you'll take these?" and Selsa began to pile them back in the basket.

"I don't think I ought to take all. I might take this one pair." He picked up a dainty pair of suede slippers.

Selsa looked hurt.

"I mean I couldn't take them all until I have earned them. This one pair is ample return for the slight service I rendered. Perhaps in time I can earn more."

"I suppose it is better for your self-respect to do that way. Grandmother says it demoralizes folks to beg."

"I agree with her."

"Then why did you beg of grandmother?"

"I didn't. I only offered a fair exchange—the devotion of a son for a sordid return in money."

"You're queer. You must have studied sociology."

Selsa hid her basket under the vines and they walked down the hill together.

"When will you come for the other things?"

"The other things seem to be beyond me for the same reason— I've made no return. Some time I may see my way——"

They were at the foot of the hill, and they parted. "Goodby," he said, regretfully, as he stood with his cap in his hand. "I can't help feeling that we shall meet again."

"Goodby," said Selsa. "Who knows?"

She walked slowly up the hill, busy with her truant thoughts. As she neared the house she met the excited Haley.

"Now what do you think, Miss Selsa? Your grandmother telephoned to Judge Hopkins to ask him why he sent a lunatic to her and what do you think he said? He called in his son and made him confess all of it. They're college fellers and doing some jinin' business. This one was being 'jined.' He's no orphan. His father is a big lumber man and his name is Girard Ramsey."

JUSTINE'S MARRIAGE

BY ELSIE ENDICOTT.

ALTHOUGH Harriet and I have lived in New york for nearly three years, we have not become reconciled to the aloofness and indifference with which most dwellers in the metropolis seem to regard their neighbors. We still observe the people next door with a kindly curiosity, in keeping with the traditions of the little town where we were born, brought up and married.

Perhaps the survival of this curiosity is due to the situation of our flat. Our modest rooms constitute what is known as a rear apartment, and our windows overlook the microscopic space which passes in this huddled city for a backyard. Hence our view is limited to the rear wall, scarcely 20 feet away, of the building which faces the next street. Since it is only human to want to look at something besides whitewashed bricks, we have glanced now and then at the windows that break the dreary blankness.

It was a June evening when first we noticed our neighbors. Harriet and I were sitting in the twilight of our little parlor, dreaming together of the cool woodland haunts we had once frequented. In the midst of our reminiscences Harriet's attention was suddenly drawn to the window.

"Frederic!" she whispered. "Do look. Be careful or she'll see you. . . . The poor thing! I wonder what the matter is!"

Peeping over Harriet's shoulder I saw a girl dressed in black seated at the fifth-floor parlor window opposite but a few feet above ours.

There was something appealing in her attitude. She struck me at once as a high-spirited girl, who, finding herself alone, had given way to a secret despair. Her hands were tightly clasped in her lap, and her eyes gazed fixedly at nothing.

Presently she got up and lighted the gas. The next instant a gray-haired man entered the room.

"Sibley is coming," we heard him say, as he threw himself into the chair by the window. "He wants a definite answer tonight."

The girl made no reply. She was standing in the middle of the room, and Harriet and I could see the despair in her large, dark eyes.

"Well, why don't you say something?" the man exclaimed.

"What is there to say, father?"

"You might at least try to be cheerful, Justine," he complained. "Heaven knows, I am no more taken with the idea of your marrying a man like Sibley than you are. But how can I help it? A word from him and I am worse than ruined."

"Very well, father," the girl replied, wearily. "When Mr. Sibley comes, you may tell him what you please. "But," with a little shiver of repulsion, "don't ask me to see him." She passed quickly into the next room.

"The poor thing!" Harriet whispered to me. "What a horrid man! I'm glad he's not my father."

But I was too troubled just then by a sense of our own undignified position to express my sympathy for Justine.

"My dear," I said to Harriet, "we've been eavesdropping!"

"Don't be absurd, Frederic," my wife easily dismissed the charge. "Our overhearing is providential. Anyway, if they desire absolute privacy, why don't they lower their voices and draw down their shades?"

One of my wife's charms is her logic. It injects such a delicious element of surprise into our discussions.

"Yes," I allowed, "they might draw their shades. But beyond that I don't follow you."

"Of course not. You're a man!" Harriet excused my denseness. "But any woman could see at once that this girl Justine is secretly in love. She is going to sacrifice her happiness and marry Sibley because her father has done something dreadful."

"All very interesting, my dear. But how does it make our eavesdropping providential?"

"We're going to help Justine," Harriet announced.

Before I could reply to this astounding statement, our attention was drawn to the "horrid man" across the area. He had risen from the chair and left the room.

In a moment he returned, accompanied by a clean shaven man of middle stature, rather portly, and very deliberate in his movements.

"Where's Justine?" the visitor asked.

"She's indisposed, Sibley," his host replied. "But she has left the matter to me."

"Look here, Bullard," Sibley said suspiciously. "I didn't come here to listen to evasions. I came for a definite answer."

"I know you did," Justine's father replied petulantly. "But you needn't snarl at me because my daughter doesn't feel equal to seeing you. It isn't my fault. I've done——"

"What is her answer?" Sibley interrupted.

"Oh she consents, just as I told you she would."

"Good!" exclaimed Sibley, and Harriet and I saw his smile of triumph, and hated him for it.

His smile quickly gave place, however, to a crafty expression.

"If I'm to get you out of your scrape, Bullard," he went on, "we shall have to be married right away. The postoffice people are suspicious and they may spring a surprise any moment."

"Will Monday evening do?" asked Bullard, his face pale with fear. "I—I don't think—that my daughter will consent to an earlier date.'

Sibley eyed his host a second. Then he said:

"Very well. Monday evening at 7. Leave all the details to me, Bullard. All you will have to do is to keep quiet. Mind you say nothing of this to that fellow Colby. He's likely to cause trouble. Has he been here lately?"

FOR A BRIEF SECOND THE FOUR MADE A TABLEAU.

"Not since I forbade Justine to see him," said Bullard. "I think, though, Sibley, that you're mistaken about Leonard Colby. He's an old friend of ours."

"He's mighty inquisitive—for a friend," sneered Sibley, getting to his feet, "and we can't afford to take a chance. What d'you say to a drive, Bullard?" he went on. "It's uncommonly close here."

We watched them go. Then Harriet whispered to me: "Leonard Colby. That's the man Justine loves."

"Impossible," I protested. "Why, I know Leonard Colby. He is one of our coming lawyers. And anyway, Harriet, it's his affair, not ours."

"But don't you see, Frederic?" Harriet exclaimed. "Mr. Colby doesn't suspect what a predicament Justine is in."

"Why doesn't Justine tell him, then?" I urged. "You say she loves him."

"Of course, she does, and that's the reason why she can't tell him. He hasn't proposed yet! And," my wife went on, "he must propose before Monday! Since you know him, Frederic, don't tell me that our overhearing isn't providential. You must see him first thing in the morning. For that poor girl's sake I hope we are not too late."

Early the next morning I called at Colby's office. Colby, however, was out. He had left word, his clerk said, that he would be detained uptown all day.

This information, I must confess, afforded me no little relief. I went to my office secretly resolved never again to meddle in the affairs of others. But on my return home that evening my resolution was swept away by my wife's greeting.

"It's too awful, Fred," she cried. "Mr. Colby came this morning and Justine has refused him!"

Colby, it seems, had presented himself to Justine and had invited her to spend the day with him in the country. But Justine, for reasons that were obscure to him, had refused. This had involved them in a discussion, the outcome of which was an impassioned declaration of love on Colby's part and an amazing anxiety on Justine's part to get him out of the house.

Colby had at least seen that his persistence was making her extremely unhappy and he had gone in sorrow and dejection. No sooner had the door closed upon him, however, than Justine flung herself on the divan and gave way to grief far more poignant than his.

"It's Justine's pride," Harriet explained. "She just couldn't bring herself to reveal the family skeleton to Mr. Colby. Don't you see, Fred, she has had to decide between the honor of her name and her love for him. And the saddest part of it is," Harriet added, "that the sacrifice is perfectly absurd. Her father doesn't deserve it. Her family name isn't worth it, and we must prevent it."

And so I went to Colby's office again. This time I found him at his desk. His naturally sunny countenance was clouded with gloom, and his response to my greeting was an inarticulate growl.

Presently I induced him to unburden himself. What he told me confirmed my wife's theory of the situation. But more than that, it made evident to me that Justine's refusal had struck at something deeper than his vanity. He was grieving less over his unrequited love than over her unwillingness to confide in him. They had always been the best of comrades until her father lost his money.

"I've done something or said something," he groaned, "that made her lose faith in me."

"Nonsense," I declared, "there's another man. What is her father doing?"

"Floating gold mines. That is another thing that worries me. If he's not careful he will get himself into trouble with the postal authorities."

"Who are his associates?" I asked.

"Well, there's Wolliford, and Sibley, and——"

"Ah, Sibley. Who is he?"

"The silent partner. He supplies the money."

"Married?" I continued.

"I don't know. I haven't heard," Colby replied listlessly. "What are you getting at?"

"Could anything be plainer?" I cried. "Her father, impoverished and eager to recoup his fortune—a charming dutiful daughter—a wealthy banker." I got up preparatory to departure. "Look up Sibley—and don't let any more grass grow under your feet!"

"Jove, Fred," Colby responded, "you're a wonder!"

"Nothing of the kind," I disclaimed. "Simply a married man. Which reminds me," I added, "My wife wants you to dine with us Monday evening. Dinner at 6:30. My wife insists on punctuality. But you will find her rather clever at solving puzzles like yours."

The final act in our little drama was brief, but full of surprises.

At quarter past 6 on Monday evening Justine, already dressed for her wedding journey and looking far from happy, lighted her parlor gas and—very carefully pulled down the shades. This was a contingency which neither Harriet nor I had foreseen, and our consternation quite bereft us of wit.

Before we had recovered sufficiently to discuss so serious a miscarriage of our plan with the calmness it demanded, we were further appalled to find that a full quarter of an hour had elapsed and that Colby had not yet appeared.

Then Harriet saw two shadows, unmistakably masculine, pass across the Bullards' window shades.

"It's Sibley and the minister," she exclaimed. "I know it is! Frederic, if Mr. Colby does not come in three minutes, I am going over and tell the minister."

"Now, my dear," I remonstrated, you mustn't get excited."

I went to the window and craned my neck in futile effort to get a view of the street. I was inwardly anathematizing a system of architecture which so brutally limits the outlook from a rear apartment to the walls of the adjacent buildings, when I became aware of an unusual stir in the neighborhood. Glancing upward, I saw a cloud of smoke rising from the next street and spreading above the roof of Bullards' apartment.

"Harriet!" I called. There's a fire in the next street. It may be the front apartment in Justine's house."

"What time is it?" Harriet asked.

"Quarter of 7."

"And Mr. Colby not here!" Harriet gasped. "He will be too late, I know he will!" She looked at me with sudden determination. "Frederic, Throw it hard, and then we'll both cry 'Fire!' We must gain time somehow."

I turned to pick up a book. But just as I drew back my arm to hurl it, Harriet exclaimed: "There's Mr. Colby—coming up the fire escape!"

He made for Justine's apartment on the top floor. Once on her balcony he flung open the window and plunged into the room. Two men stood staring at him—Bullard and Sibley.

"Where's Justine?" Colby panted. "Quick! House afire—staircase cut off—go down fire escape!"

His voice brought Justine. For a brief second the four made a tableau. Then Sibley awoke to the significance of Colby's warning. His eyes turned furtively from Colby to the window, and with a rush he gained the balcony and fairly slid down the ladder.

His frenzied exit aroused the others.

"You next, father," said Justine.

Her father did not stop to argue the order of their going. Like Sibley he seemed quite willing to intrust Justine to Colby.

Justine followed him, and then came Colby. As they began to descend Colby glanced up and recognized us. He smiled broadly and waved his hand.

It flashed upon me then that he had exaggerated the extent of the fire to suit his purposes. It was, as I learned later, a small affair which the firemen had confined to the basement of Bullard's house.

"Well," I said to Harriet, "that ends our part."

But it didn't. There remained the wedding. Harriet was matron of honor, and I was best man.

Sibley was not present. Colby had "looked him up" so effectually that he had found it expedient to take a long vacation in Europe.

Raised Skyward.

The suburbanite was all sympathy. "What's the trouble, my dear?" he asked, as he came home and found his wife in tears.

"T-trouble enough," sobbed his young wife, "you k-know that five d-dollar incubator the man sold me? Well, it exploded today and blew all the chickens through the roof."

"Oh, well, cheer up, Martha. The man said it would raise chickens and you see it did."

In After Years.

For three long, weary years they had been up against the matrimonial game.

Together they were meandering down the street, when the wife paused in front of a jeweler's window.

"Do you remember, dear," she said, "how we used to stop here and look at the wedding rings—one of which I am wearing now?"

"Ah, yes!" rejoined the husband, reflectively. "Those were happy days."

The Amateur.

Stern Parent—Learning to dance, eh? Well, four hours every evening is too long for you to be on your feet, young man.

Son—But, pa, I am only on my feet two hours.

Stern parent—Two hours? How do you make that out?

Son—Why, the rest of the time I am on my partner's feet.

Per Simmons.

"How do Jack and Joanne ever manage to scrape a living?"

"Why, he makes the money first and she makes it last."—Harvard Lampoon.